

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"> 07/19/00 09/03/00 U.S. PRO </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">UTILITY PATENT</h2> <h1 style="margin: 0;">APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))</p> </div> </div>	Attorney Docket No. 000810	Total Pages	<div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"> 07/19/00 09/03/00 U.S. PRO </div>
First Named Inventor or Application Identifier			
Masataka FUKUIZUMI, Toru MATOBA and Hiroshi OSUDA			
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check Box, if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Duplicate		ADDRESS TO: Director of Patents and Trademarks BOX PATENT APPLICATIONS Washington, D.C. 20231	
APPLICATION ELEMENTS FOR: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING CHEMICAL SOLUTIONS			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fee Transmittal Form (Incorporated within this form) (Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing) 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specification Total Pages [32] <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing(s) (35 USC 113) Total Sheets [7] <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oath or Declaration Total Pages [5] a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newly executed (original) b. <input type="checkbox"/> Copy from prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d) (for continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed). i. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Deletion of Inventor(s)</u> Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in prior application, see 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incorporation by reference (useable if box 4b is checked) The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein. 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix) 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all necessary) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Readable Copy b. <input type="checkbox"/> Paper Copy (identical to computer copy) c. <input type="checkbox"/> Statement Verifying identity of above copies 			
<u>ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS</u>			
8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assignment Papers (cover sheet and document(s))			
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement (when there is an assignee)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney	

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications
under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

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and Hiroshi OSUDA**

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10. ☐ English translation Document (if applicable)
11. ☒ Information Disclosure Statement ☒ Copies of IDS Citations (PTO-1449 w/3 refs.)
12. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
14. ☐ Small Entity Statement(s) ☐ Statement filed in prior application
Status still proper and desired.
15. ☒ Claim for Convention Priority ☐ Certified copy of Priority Document
- a. Priority of _____ application no. _____ filed on _____ is claimed under 35 USC 119.
The certified copies/copy have/has been filed in prior application Serial No. _____.
(For Continuing Applications, if applicable).
16. ☐ Other _____
17. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:
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FEE TRANSMITTAL	Number Filed	Number Extra	Rate	Basic Fee
The filing fee is calculated below				\$690.00
Total Claims	38 - 20	18	x \$18.00	324.00
Independent Claims	3 - 3		x \$78.00	
Multiple Dependent Claims			\$260.00	
Basic Filing Fee				1014.00
Reduction by 1/2 for small entity				
Fee for recording enclosed Assignment			\$40.00	40.00
TOTAL				1054.00

UTILITY PATENT
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[XX] A check in the amount of \$1,054.00 is enclosed to cover the filing fee of \$1,014.00 and the assignment recordation fee of \$40.00.

[] Please charge our Deposit Account No. 01-2340 in the total amount of _____ to cover the filing fee and the _____ assignment recordation fee. A duplicate of this sheet is attached.

[XX] The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment for any additional filing fees required under 37 CFR 1.16 or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 01-2340. A duplicate of this sheet is attached.

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SGA/yap

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING CHEMICAL SOLUTIONS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for preparing chemical solutions, and more particularly, to a method and apparatus for preparing chemical solutions having high purity grades and used to fabricate electronic devices, such as semiconductor devices, from chemical gases
10 having industrial chemical grades.

During the fabrication of electronic devices, such as semiconductor devices and LCDs, a wide variety of chemical solutions having different concentrations and different compositions are used in abundance as required in each
5 fabrication process. Such chemical solutions are purchased from chemical makers.

Each type of chemical solution is stored in a reservoir tank, which is located in a fabrication plant, and replenished by tanker trucks in a liquid form. When
10 replenishing the reservoir tank, an impurity may get mixed with and contaminate the chemical solution. Further, the storage of the chemical solution over a long period may change the concentration or composition of the chemical solution. A reduction in quality, or a lower purity, of
25 such chemical solution may degrade the quality of the fabricated electronic devices.

Therefore, if the concentration of the chemical solution changes, the concentration is adjusted before usage, and if the chemical solution is contaminated by an
30 impurity, the chemical solution is purified before usage. Such adjustment and purification takes time. Further, the purchase of chemical solutions increases the fabrication cost of the electronic devices.

Additionally, waste material, which includes chemical

gases and liquids, must be reduced in semiconductor fabrication plants to protect the environment and comply with the ISO 14000 series of standards.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a method and apparatus for preparing a chemical solution having a relatively high purity from a chemical gas having an industrial chemical grade.

To achieve the above object, the present invention provides a method for preparing a chemical solution. The method includes the step of dissolving a chemical gas in a liquid to prepare the chemical solution. The liquid is pure water or a mixture having a predetermined composition. The method further includes the step of discharging at least either one of an adjusted amount of the chemical gas that was not dissolved in the liquid and a predetermined amount of the chemical solution. The dissolving step and the discharging step are performed at substantially the same time.

A further aspect of the present invention provides a chemical solution preparation apparatus including a preparation tank for storing a liquid, which is one of pure water or a mixture having a predetermined composition, a dissolution unit for dissolving a chemical gas in the liquid, and at least either one of a gas discharge control unit for discharging an adjusted amount of the chemical gas that was not dissolved in the liquid by the dissolution unit and a liquid discharge control unit for discharging a predetermined amount of the chemical solution from the preparation tank. The gas discharge control unit and the liquid discharge control unit are operated at substantially the same time as the dissolution unit.

Another aspect of the present invention provides a chemical solution preparation apparatus including a dissolution unit for dissolving a chemical gas in a liquid to prepare a chemical solution and cooling the chemical solution during the preparation, and a gas discharge control unit for discharging an adjusted amount of the chemical gas that was not dissolved in the liquid by the dissolution unit.

Other aspects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, illustrating by way of example the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention, together with objects and advantages thereof, may best be understood by reference to the following description of the presently preferred embodiments together with the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a fabrication plant, which has a closed gas system, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a schematic diagram showing a solution refinement apparatus of the first embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 3A, 3B, and 3C are schematic diagrams each showing a bubbler element;

Fig. 4 is a schematic diagram showing a gas purification unit;

Fig. 5 is a schematic diagram showing a gas collection unit;

Figs. 6A, 6B, 6C, 7A, 7B, 8, and 9 are schematic diagrams each showing further bubbler elements;

Fig. 10 is a schematic view illustrating heat transfer

that occurs between a gas cylinder and a fabrication tank;

Fig. 11 is a schematic view illustrating a further dissolving method; and

Fig. 12 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a solution refinement device according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

A first embodiment according to the present invention will now be discussed.

Fig. 1 shows a fabrication plant, which has a closed gas system, according to one embodiment of the present invention. The fabrication plant includes a chemical solution preparation apparatus 1, a gas reservoir unit 2 for storing a general industrial chemical gas, and a fabrication facility 3. The solution preparation apparatus 1 supplies refined chemical gas, which is prepared by purifying the general chemical gas, to the fabrication facility 3. The refined chemical gas is used at the fabrication facility 3 to fabricate, for example, electronic devices. The solution preparation apparatus 1 collects the chemical gas and chemical solution that has been used at the fabrication facility 3 to prepare a chemical solution (chemical liquid). The solution preparation apparatus 1 includes a chemical solution refinement device 11, a gas purification unit 12, and a gas collection unit 13.

The solution refinement device 11 simultaneously dissolves and refines the industrial chemical gas to prepare and supply to the fabrication facility 3 a refined chemical solution (liquid chemical) having a relatively high purity that is optimal for usage at the fabrication facility 3. General industrial chemical gases cost one tenth or less as much as chemical gases produced exclusively for

semiconductors. Thus, the solution refinement device 11 reduces the cost for preparing chemical solutions by refining industrial chemical gases. The solution refinement device 11 prepares chemical solutions on demand from the fabrication facility 3. Thus, the prepared chemical solution need not be stored over a long period of time. This substantially prevents the mixture of impurities and change in composition. Thus, the chemical solution supplied to the fabrication facility 3 is stable. Further, since the dissolution and refinement are performed simultaneously, the time for preparing the chemical solution is shortened.

The industrial chemical gas is sent from the solution refinement device 11 to the gas purification unit 12 when needed by the fabrication facility 3. The gas purification unit 12 purifies the industrial chemical gas to prepare refined chemical gas and supplies the refined chemical gas to the fabrication facility 3.

The gas collection unit 13 collects chemical gas components from the chemical solution that has been used at the fabrication facility 3 and supplies the collected chemical gas to the solution refinement device 11. The solution refinement device 11 prepares a refined chemical solution (e.g., liquid) from the used chemical gas and the collected chemical gas and supplies the refined chemical solution to the fabrication facility 3. This decreases the consumption of fresh industrial gas and decreases the cost of the chemical solution.

The solution refinement device 11 will now be described with reference to Fig. 2.

The solution refinement device 11 includes a preparation tank 21, a dissolution unit 22, a gas discharge control unit 23, a liquid discharge control unit 24, a cooling unit 25, and a supply unit 26.

The dissolution unit 22 prepares a chemical solution

having the composition required by the fabrication facility 3 of Fig. 1. A chemical gas is supplied to the dissolution unit 22 from a gas cylinder 28. The dissolution unit 22 dissolves the chemical gas in pure water or a solvent, such as a mixture of pure water and a chemical liquid (e.g., 50 percentage by weight of hydrofluoric acid) provided from a material tank 27, to prepare a chemical solution having a predetermined concentration.

The material tank 27 is used in accordance with the type of chemical solution that is prepared. For example, the material tank 27 is required when preparing a mixture of ammonium fluoride and hydrofluoric acid. On the other hand, the material tank 27 is not required when preparing ammonia water. A plurality of the gas cylinders 28, each containing a different type of chemical gas, may be employed. In this case, the gas cylinders 28 that are to be employed are selected as required.

Undissolved chemical gases including impurities reside in the preparation tank 21. The gas discharge control unit 23 discharges the undissolved chemical gases from the preparation tank 21. This eliminates impurities and enables preparation of a chemical solution having a high purity.

The liquid discharge control unit 24 discharges a predetermined amount of the chemical solution from the preparation tank 21. The discharged chemical solution includes impurities that cannot be disposed of by the gas discharge control unit 23 (e.g., non-volatile components such as metal). By discharging impurities with the liquid at the bottom of the tank 21, a chemical solution having high purity is produced.

The gas discharge control unit 23 (and/or the liquid discharge control unit 24) dissolves chemical gases in the liquid contained in the preparation tank 21 and simultaneously performs a predetermined treatment. That is,

the solution refinement device 11 dissolves chemical gases and simultaneously refines the chemical solution. Thus, a very pure chemical solution is quickly prepared.

The cooling unit 25 cools the liquid contained in the preparation tank 21 to a temperature that is optimal for dissolving chemical gases, such as 20°C or lower. The heat generated when dissolving chemical gases (heat of dissolution or heat of neutralization) increases the temperature of the liquid in the tank 21. Generally, more gas is dissolved in the solvent at lower temperatures. Thus, an increase in the temperature of the solvent is prevented to improve dissolution of the chemical gases. This increases the dissolution efficiency of the chemical gases.

In response to a demand from the fabrication facility 3 of Fig. 1, the supply unit 26 supplies the industrial chemical gas and the prepared chemical solution to the fabrication facility 3.

The structure of each of the units 22 to 26 will now be discussed.

The dissolution unit 22 includes a controller 31, a gas control valve 32, a material control valve 33, a water control valve 34, a bubbler control valve 35, a gas mass flow controller 36, a material mass flow controller 37, a water mass flow controller 38, a bubbler element 39, a thermometer 40, an ultrasonic wave velocity meter 41, and a specific conductance meter 42.

The gas flow control valve 32 and the gas mass flow controller 36 are arranged in a pipe L1, through which the chemical gas is supplied from the gas cylinder 28. The controller 31 controls the gas control valve 32 and the gas mass flow controller 36 to permit and inhibit the flow of the chemical gas and thus to adjust the flow rate of the chemical gas.

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The material control valve 33 and the material mass flow controller 37 are arranged in a pipe L2, through which the chemical solution is supplied from the material tank 27 to the preparation tank 21. The controller 31 controls the material control valve 33 and the material mass flow controller 37 to control the supply of the chemical solution to the preparation tank 21.

The water control valve 34 and the water mass flow controller 38 are arranged in a pipe L3, through which pure water is supplied to the preparation tank 21.

The bubbler control valve 35 is arranged in a pipe L4, through which the chemical gas flows into the preparation tank 21 from the pipe L1. The controller 31 controls the bubbler control valve 35 and thus controls the supply of the chemical gas to the preparation tank 21.

The bubbler element 39, which is connected to the pipe L4 and arranged at the bottom of the preparation tank 21, has a plurality of nozzles 39a. The chemical gas supplied from the pipe L4 is ejected from the plurality of nozzles 39a forming fine bubbles.

As shown in Figs. 3A to 3C, the bubbler element 39 has a generally square plate-like shape with the nozzles 39a formed in the upper surface of the bubbler element 39. The bubbler element 39 forms fine bubbles of the chemical gas to facilitate dissolution of the chemical gas into the pure water. In other words, the nozzles 39a improve the efficiency of dissolving the chemical gas.

The nozzles 39a are each formed so that the chemical gas bubbles are ejected in a direction inclined by a predetermined angle (e.g., 30 degrees) from the vertical direction. The diagonally discharged bubbles form a swirl in the preparation tank 21 and agitate the liquid in the tank 21. This further improves the dissolution efficiency of the chemical gas.

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The thermometer 40, the ultrasonic wave velocity meter 41, and the specific conductance meter 42 are used to measure the concentration of the solution prepared in the preparation tank 21 and are connected to the controller 31. The controller 31 calculates the concentration of the chemical solution from the signals provided by the thermometer 40, the ultrasonic wave velocity meter 41, and the specific conductance meter 42. In accordance with the calculated concentration, the controller 31 controls the supplied amounts of the chemical gas, the chemical solution, and the pure water by manipulating the valves 32-34 and the mass flow controllers 36-38 so that the chemical solution in the preparation tank 21 has the desired concentration.

The concentration of the chemical solution in the preparation tank 21 may also be estimated from the temperature change of the liquid detected by the thermometer 40. For example, the controller 31 may be connected to a load cell 28a of the gas cylinder 28 to meter the amount of residual chemical gas in the gas cylinder 28. The amount of the used chemical gas used as raw material is then calculated based on the residual amount. This enables the controller 31 to obtain the concentration of the chemical solution being prepared in the preparation tank 21.

The gas discharge control unit 23 includes the controller 31, a concentration meter 43, an output control valve 44, and an input control valve 45. The output control valve 44 is arranged in a pipe L5, through which the undissolved chemical gas from the preparation tank 21 is discharged. The concentration meter 43 measures the chemical gas concentration of the discharged gas in the pipe L5. The input control valve 45 is arranged in a pipe L6 extending from the pipe L5 between the concentration meter 43 and the output control valve 44. The end of the pipe L6 is submerged in the chemical solution of the preparation

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tank 21.

The controller 31 controls the control valves 44, 45 in accordance with the chemical gas concentration of the discharged gas measured by the concentration meter 43. More specifically, the controller 31 opens the output control valve 44 and closes the input control valve 45 if the chemical gas concentration is lower than the predetermined value. This discharges chemical gas including impurities through the pipe L5. If the chemical gas concentration is equal to or greater than a predetermined value, the output control valve 44 is either closed or its opening is narrowed and the input control valve 45 is opened. This forms bubbles in the liquid and dissolves the high concentration chemical gas. Accordingly, chemical gas having a high concentration is recycled.

The liquid discharge control unit 24 includes the controller 31 and a discharge valve 46. The discharge valve 46 is arranged in a liquid discharge pipe L7, which is connected to the bottom of the preparation tank 21. The controller 31 controls the discharge valve 46 during dissolution of the chemical gas and discharges a constant amount of chemical solution, which includes impurities.

The cooling unit 25 includes the controller 31, a cooling element 47, and a cooling pump 48. The cooling element 47 and the cooling pump 48 are arranged in a cooling pipe L8. One end of the cooling pipe L8 is connected to the bottom of the preparation tank 21, while the other end drains into the upper portion of the tank 21 as shown in Fig. 2.

The controller 31 drives the pump 48 to circulate the liquid in the tank 21 through the pipe L8 and cool the circulating liquid with the cooling element 47 so that the temperature of the liquid in the tank 21 is cooled to a temperature optimal for dissolving the chemical gas (e.g.,

20°C).

5 The supply unit 26 includes the controller 31, gas and
solution supply control valves 49, 50, and a solution supply
pump 51. The solution supply control valve 50 and the
solution supply pump 51 are arranged in a pipe L9 connected
10 to the bottom of the preparation tank 21. The controller 31
controls the gas supply control valve 49 to supply chemical
gas from the gas cylinder 28 to the fabrication facility 3
via the gas purification unit 12, which is shown in Fig. 1.
Further, the controller 31 opens the solution supply control
valve 50 and drives the solution supply pump 51 to supply
the chemical solution from the preparation tank 21 to the
fabrication facility 3.

15 A case in which ammonia water is prepared by the
solution refinement device 11 and provided to the
fabrication facility 3 will now be discussed. Liquefied
ammonia gas is contained in the gas cylinder 28.

20 The controller 31 first controls the water control
valve 34 and the water mass flow controller 38 to supply a
predetermined amount of pure water to the preparation tank
21. The controller 31 then controls the gas control valve
32, the bubbler control valve 35, and the gas mass flow
controller 36 to supply a predetermined amount of ammonia
gas to the preparation tank 21. This forms ammonia gas
25 bubbles in the pure water thereby dissolving the ammonia gas
and preparing ammonia water.

30 The dissolution of the ammonia gas in the pure water
generates heat of hydration and increases the temperature of
the chemical solution in the tank 21. Accordingly, the
controller 31 drives the cooling pump 48 to cool the
solution with the cooling element 47.

To adjust the concentration of the ammonia water to a
predetermined concentration, for example, to a concentration
within the range between zero and 29wt% that is for the

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5 fabrication of semiconductors, the controller 31 measures the temperature, the ultrasonic wave velocity, and the specific conductance with the associated thermometer 40, the ultrasonic wave velocity meter 41, and the specific conductance meter 42. The concentration of the ammonia water is then computed from the measured result.

10 The controller 31 controls the gas, water, and bubbler control valves 32, 34, 35 and the gas and water mass flow controllers 36, 38 to supply the ammonia gas and pure water to the preparation tank 21 and adjust the concentration of the ammonia water. When the concentration of the ammonia water reaches the target value, the controller 31 closes the bubbler control valve 35 and stops supplying ammonia gas.

15 Afterward, in response to the demand from the fabrication facility 3 of Fig. 1, the controller 31 controls the solution supply control valve 50 and the solution supply pump 51 to supply the ammonia water prepared in the preparation tank 21 to the fabrication facility 3.

20 A case in which a mixture of ammonium fluoride and hydrofluoric acid is prepared by the solution refinement device 11 will now be discussed. The material tank 27 contains 50wt% of hydrofluoric acid.

25 The controller 31 first controls the material and water control valves 33, 34 and the material and water mass flow controllers 37, 38 to supply a predetermined amount of hydrofluoric acid and pure water to the preparation tank 21. The controller 31 then controls the gas and bubbler control valves 32, 35 and the gas mass flow controller 36 to supply ammonia gas to the preparation tank 21.

30 The dissolution of the ammonia gas in the mixture of ammonium fluoride and hydrofluoric acid generates heat of neutralization and increases the temperature of the solution in the preparation tank 21. Accordingly, the controller 31 drives the cooling pump 48 to cool the solution with the

cooling element 47.

For example, to adjust the concentration of ammonium fluoride within a range of 0 to 40wt% and hydrofluoric acid within a range of 0 to 5wt%, the controller 31 measures the parameters associated with the thermometer 40, the ultrasonic wave velocity meter 41, and the specific conductance meter 42 to calculate the concentration of the mixture of ammonium fluoride and hydrofluoric acid.

Based on the calculated result, the controller 31 controls the gas, material, water, and bubbler control valves 32-35 and the gas, material, and water mass flow controllers 36-38 to adjust the concentration of the ammonium fluoride and hydrofluoric acid mixture. When the target concentration is reached, the controller 31 closes the bubbler control valve 35 and completes the supply of ammonia gas.

Subsequently, the controller 31 controls the solution supply control valve 50 and the solution supply pump 51 in response to the demands of the fabrication facility 3 and supplies the mixture of ammonium fluoride and hydrofluoric acid, which has the predetermined concentration, from the preparation tank 21 to the fabrication facility 3.

The gas purification unit 12 will now be discussed with reference to Fig. 4.

The gas purification unit 12 includes a gas purification tank 61 and a spray head 62 arranged on an upper wall of the tank 61. Pure water is sprayed into the tank 61 from the spray head 62. A drain pipe L11 for draining water, which includes impurities, is connected to the bottom of the tank 61. Further, the industrial chemical gas of the gas cylinder 28 is supplied into a lower portion of the tank 61 through a pipe L12. Refined gas is supplied to the fabrication facility 3 through a pipe L13 connected to the upper portion of the tank 61.

The pure water is sprayed into the industrial chemical gas in the tank 61 to eliminate impurities such as metal and fine particles suspended in the chemical gas. The water and impurities are then drained into the drain pipe L11.

The gas purification unit 12 purifies relatively low purity chemical gas, which is used for general industrial purposes, and refines the chemical gas to a high purity so that the gas can be used to fabricate electronic devices. The high purity chemical gas flows through the pipe L13 to the fabrication facility 3.

The gas collection unit 13 will now be discussed with reference to Fig. 5.

The gas collection unit 13 includes a gas extraction tank 63 and a heater 64. Used ammonia water is supplied to the tank 63 from the fabrication facility 3 through a pipe L14. Bubbles of nitrogen gas, or inert gas, produced when heated by a heater 64 and/or supplied through a pipe L15 are formed in the used ammonia. This decomposes the used ammonia water into ammonia gas and liquid (water including impurities) and enables collection of the ammonia gas. The collected ammonia gas is supplied to the preparation tank 21 of the solution refinement device 11 through a pipe L16.

The used ammonia gas is supplied to the preparation tank 21 from the fabrication facility through a pipe L17. First and second control valves 65, 66 are arranged in the pipes L16, L17, respectively. The control valves 65, 66 are opened and closed as required to form bubbles of the used ammonia gas or the collected ammonia gas in the liquid contained in the preparation tank 21 (pure water, hydrofluoric acid, etc.).

In this manner, the used chemical gas and the chemical gas collected from the used chemical solution are recycled. This decreases the amount of fresh chemical gas that is used and decreases the cost of raw materials.

The first embodiment has the advantages described below.

(1) The dissolution of an industrial chemical gas in the preparation tank 21, the control of the discharged gas and/or the discharge of the predetermined amount of the chemical solution from the dissolution unit 22 are performed simultaneously. That is, dissolution of the industrial chemical gas and refinement of the chemical solution are performed simultaneously. Thus, the chemical solution is prepared with a stable quality within a short period of time and supplied to the fabrication facility. Further, the cost of purchasing fresh chemical solution is decreased significantly.

(2) When dissolving the chemical gas, the cooling unit 25 cools the chemical solution to a temperature optimal for dissolving chemical gases. This improves the chemical gas dissolving efficiency.

(3) The nozzles 39a formed in the bubbler element 39 improve the dissolving efficiency of the chemical gas.

(4) The concentration of the chemical solution being prepared is calculated from the parameters measured by the thermometer 40, the ultrasonic wave velocity meter 41, and the specific conductance meter 42. Thus, the concentration of a single component chemical solution in which a chemical gas is dissolved in pure water and the concentration of a two component chemical solution in which the chemical gas is dissolved in a mixture having a predetermined composition are accurately measured.

(5) The gas discharge control unit 23 forms bubbles of the undissolved chemical gas in the preparation tank 21. This efficiently dissolves the chemical gas. Further, this decreases the amount of wasted chemical gas.

(6) The used chemical gas discharged from the electronic device fabrication facility 3 is dissolved in a

liquid. This forms a chemical closed gas system and decreases the cost for purchasing fresh chemical gas.

(7) The gas collection unit 13 collects chemical gases from the used chemical solution discharged by the electronic device fabrication facility 3 and dissolves the collected chemical gas in a liquid. This forms a chemical closed gas system and decreases the cost for purchasing fresh chemical gas.

A second embodiment according to the present invention will now be described with reference to Fig. 12. Like or same reference numerals are given to those components that are the same as the corresponding components of the first embodiment. In the second embodiment, a chemical solution refinement device 81, which is shown in Fig. 12, is used in lieu of the refinement device 11 of the first embodiment.

The chemical solution refinement device 81 includes a cooling device 82, a dissolution unit 83, a gas discharge control unit 84, a debubbling device 85, a concentration measuring device 86, a mixing tank 87, a circulation control unit 88, a liquid discharge control unit 89, and a supply unit 90.

The cooling device 82 performs the functions of the preparation tank 21 and the cooling unit 25 of the first embodiment. That is, in the second embodiment, the chemical gas in the cooling device 82 is dissolved in pure water to prepare a chemical solution, and the chemical solution is cooled to a temperature that enables optimal dissolution of the chemical gas, for example, 20°C or lower.

The dissolution unit 83 supplies the chemical gases contained in first and second gas cylinders 91, 92 to the cooling device 82 when required. The dissolution unit 83 includes a controller 93, a first gas control valve 94, a second gas control valve 95, a waste control valve 96, a first gas mass flow controller 97, a second gas mass flow

controller 98, and a water mass flow controller 99. The controller 93 adjusts the control and operation timing of the control valves 94-96, the mass flow controllers 97-99, and each of the units 83-90.

The control valves 94, 95 and the mass flow controllers 97, 98 are arranged in pipes L21, L22 for supplying chemical gas to the cooling device 82 from the gas cylinders 91, 92, respectively. The control valve 96 and the mass flow controller 99 are arranged in a pipe L23 for supplying pure water to the cooling device 82. The gas cylinders 91, 92 contain different types of chemical gases. The controller 93 controls the water control valve 96 and the water mass flow controller 99 to supply a predetermined amount of pure water to the cooling device 82. Afterward, the controller 93 controls the first and second gas control valves 94, 95 and the first and second gas mass flow controllers 97, 98 to form bubbles of a predetermined amount of the chemical gases from the gas cylinders 91, 92 in the cooling device 82. This forms a chemical solution in which two chemical gas components are dissolved within a short period of time. The dissolution of the chemical gases may be performed in two stages if necessary. That is, the first chemical gas may be dissolved in pure water to prepare a chemical solution having a predetermined concentration. Afterward, the second chemical gas may be dissolved in the chemical solution to prepare the desired chemical solution.

Although not shown in the drawing, the cooling device 82 has the same thermometer, ultrasonic wave velocity meter, and specific conductance meter as the first embodiment. The controller 93 calculates the concentration of the chemical solution in the cooling device 82 based on the measured results and controls the supply of chemical gas and pure water based on the calculated result to adjust the concentration of the chemical solution. The controller 93

may also calculate the concentration of the chemical solution in the cooling device 82 based on the remaining amount of chemical gas metered by load cells 91a, 92a provided in the gas cylinders 91, 92, respectively.

Further, these calculation procedures may both be used.

The undissolved chemical gases in the cooling device 82 flows through a pipe L24 to the gas discharge control unit 84. The gas discharge control unit 84 includes the controller 93, a return valve 100, a discharge valve 101, and a concentration meter 102. The discharge valve 101 is arranged in the pipe L24. The concentration meter 102 measures the concentration of the chemical gas flowing through the pipe L24. A pipe L27 extends between the concentration meter 102 and the discharge valve 101. A pipe L25 connected to the pipe L27 extends to a location where it is submerged into the chemical solution in the cooling device 82. The return valve 100 is arranged in the pipe L25.

The controller 93 controls the opening and closing of the valves 100, 101. More specifically, the controller 93 closes the return valve 100 and opens the gas discharge valve 101 when the chemical gas concentration is lower than a predetermined value. This discharges chemical gases that include impurities through the pipe L24.

The controller 93 closes the gas discharge valve 101 and opens the return valve 100 when the chemical gas concentration is equal to or higher than the predetermined value. This returns the discharged chemical gas to the cooling device 82 and forms bubbles in the liquid of the cooling device 82 when the concentration of the waste chemical gas in the pipe L24 is equal to or higher than the predetermined value. Accordingly, recyclable chemical gases are not wasted.

The debubbling device 85 is connected to the cooling

device 82 by a pipe L26. The debubbling device 85 extracts undissolved chemical gases from the chemical solution that is sent from the cooling device 82. The extracted chemical gas is sent to the gas discharge control unit 84 through a pipe L27. Further, the chemical gas extracted by the debubbling device 85 is returned to the cooling device in accordance with its concentration. The debubbling device 85 includes, for example, a hydrophobic filter for separating the undissolved chemical gases.

The chemical solution from which the undissolved chemical gas has been extracted is sent from the debubbling device 85 to the concentration measuring device 86 through a pipe L28. The concentration measuring device 86 measures the concentration of the chemical solution. The chemical solution is sent from the concentration measuring device 86 to the mixing tank 87 through a pipe L29 and stored in the mixing tank 87.

The circulation control unit 88 includes the controller 93, a control valve 103, and a circulation pump 104. The valve 103 and the pump 104 are arranged in a pipe L30, which connects the bottom of the mixing tank 87 to the cooling device 82. When the chemical solution in the mixing tank 87 does not have the desired concentration, the controller 93 drives the pump 104 and returns the chemical solution from the mixing tank 87 to the cooling device 82 based on the measured result of the concentration measuring device 86. Further, the cooling device 82 adjusts the concentration of the chemical solution by supplying chemical gas or pure water.

The liquid discharge control unit 89 includes the controller 93 and a liquid discharge valve 105. The controller 93 controls the opening and closing of the valve 105 to discharge a predetermined amount of the chemical solution from the mixing tank 87. This removes impurities

that cannot be disposed of by the discharged chemical gas and thus produces a very pure chemical solution.

The supply unit 90 includes the controller 93, the control valve 106, and a pump 107. The valve 106 and the pump 107 are arranged in a pipe L31 connecting the mixing tank 87 and the fabrication facility 3 (Fig. 1). The controller 93 controls the valve 106 and the pump 107 and supplies the fabrication facility 3 with a chemical solution having the predetermined concentration.

In addition to the advantages of the first embodiment, the second embodiment has the advantages described below.

(1) The cooling device 82 performs the dissolution of chemical gases and the refinement of the chemical solution when performing cooling. This efficiently dissolves the chemical gases. Accordingly, the cost for purchasing fresh chemical gases is decreased.

It should be apparent to those skilled in the art that the present invention may be embodied in many other specific forms without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. Particularly, it should be understood that the present invention may be embodied in the following forms.

In the first embodiment, the bubbler element 39 has a generally square plate-like shape. However, the bubbler element 39 may have any shape in accordance with the structure (shape, inner dimensions, depth) of the preparation tank 21. For example, a comb-like bubbler element 71a shown in Fig. 6A, a circular bubbler element 71b shown in Fig. 6B, and a spiral bubbler element 71c shown in Fig. 6C may be employed.

In the first embodiment, the inclination of the nozzles 39a of the bubbler element 39 may be changed as long as the chemical gas bubbles swirl in the chemical solution of the preparation tank 21. For example, as shown in Fig. 7A, a bubbler element 72a having nozzles 39a inclined in the four

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directions shown by the arrows may be employed. Alternatively, as shown in Fig. 7B, a bubbler element 72b having nozzles inclined in the two directions shown by the arrows may be employed. In these cases, bubbles are ejected
5 in the direction of the arrows by the bubbler elements 72a, 72b.

In the first embodiment, instead of inclining the nozzles 39a of the bubbler element 39 by the predetermined angle, a bubbler element 73 having nozzles 39a that eject
10 bubbles vertically may be employed as shown in Fig. 8. In this case, a deflecting plate 74 is located above each of the nozzles 39a. Since the chemical gas bubbles move along the deflecting plates 74, the deflecting plates 74 function in the same manner as the inclined nozzles 39a. Further,
5 the inclination of the deflecting plates 74 may be changed to adapt to various shapes of the preparation tank 21. Additionally, the bubbler element 73 may be inclined at a predetermined angle.

In the above embodiments, a bubbler element 75 shown in Fig. 9 may be used. A coolant is circulated through the bubbler element 75. Thus, the bubbler element 75 also has
20 the function of the cooling element 47 and serves as a cooling mechanism (heat exchanger). When fine bubbles of ammonia gas are ejected from the bubbler element 75, ammonia gas starts to dissolve into the pure water near the bubbler
25 element 75. The generated heat of hydration increases the temperature of the liquid near the bubbler element 75. Accordingly, the vicinity of the location where heat is generated is cooled by employing the cooling mechanism
30 function in the bubbler element 75. In addition, the bubbler element 75 cools ammonia gas. As a result, the bubbler element 75, which cools liquids, improves the dissolving efficiency of the ammonia gas and decreases the amount of ammonia gas that is discharged without being

dissolved.

As shown in Fig. 10, a heat exchange pipe 76 connecting the gas cylinder 28 and the preparation tank 21 may be used in lieu of the cooling element 47. When supplying ammonia gas from the gas cylinder 28, the gas cylinder 28 is cooled by evaporative cooling. Further, heat is generated when the ammonia gas is dissolved in the pure water, and when the ammonia gas is dissolved in 50wt% of hydrofluoric acid. Thus, the preparation tank 21 is cooled by the heat exchange pipe 76. This arrangement efficiently uses heat energy.

A known temperature adjusting device, such as a thermostat, may be used in lieu of the cooling element 47.

In the first embodiment, the chemical solution may be prepared without dissolving the chemical gas in pure water or hydrofluoric acid. For example, as shown in Fig. 11, an ice particle generator 78 may be employed to provide ice particles to the preparation tank 21, into which the ammonia gas of the gas cylinder 28 is drawn. The heat of hydration generated when the ammonia gas changes to ammonia water is cooled by the heat of dissolution of the ice particles 78. Further, ammonia gas is dissolved in the water film formed on the surface of the ice particles 78 by the heat of hydration. Accordingly, cooling and dissolving of the ammonia gas is performed simultaneously. Further, the cooling and dissolution enables efficient preparation of the chemical solution.

The above embodiments employ the mass flow controllers 36, 97, 98 to adjust the supplied amount of chemical gas. However, at least one of a depressurizing valve, a manual valve, an automatic valve, and a mass flow controller may be employed to adjust the supplied amount of chemical gas.

In each of the above embodiments, a gravimeter, acid-base titration, or a method and device for measuring the near infrared absorption waveform may be employed to measure

the amount of dissolved chemical gas (chemical solution concentration).

In the above embodiments, at least one of ammonia gas, hydrogen fluoride gas, hydrogen sulfide gas, and hydrogen chloride gas may be used as the general industrial chemical gas.

Ammonia water and a mixture of ammonia water and hydrofluoric acid are prepared in the above embodiments. However, ammonia may be used as the chemical gas, and the prepared chemical solution may be at least one of ammonia water, a mixture of ammonia water and hydrogen peroxide, and a mixture of ammonium fluoride and hydrofluoric acid.

In the above embodiments, instead of purifying the chemical gas supplied to the fabrication facility 3 in the gas purification unit 12, the industrial chemical gas supplied to the chemical solution refinement device 11 may be refined. That is, the gas purification unit 12 may be arranged in the pipes L1, L21, L22 through which industrial chemical gases are supplied to the solution refinement devices 11, 81. In such case, the refined gas is dissolved in a solvent, such as pure water, to prepare a chemical solution having higher purity.

In the first embodiment, instead of using the gas purification unit 12, which sprays pure water, the industrial chemical gas may be purified by using a static mixer. In this case, the industrial chemical gas is mixed with pure water in the static mixer. This increases the area of contact between the industrial chemical gas and the pure water and efficiently refines the industrial chemical gas.

In the above embodiments, the pumps 51, 107 need not be employed to supply the prepared chemical solution to the fabrication facility 3. For example, an inert gas may be supplied to the tanks 21, 87 to send the chemical solution

to the fabrication facility with the pressure of the inert gas.

5 In the above embodiments, instead of using every one of the thermometer 40, the ultrasonic wave velocity meter 41, and the specific conductance meter 42, at least one of the ultrasonic wave velocity meter 41, the specific conductance meter 42, a viscosity meter, and a specific gravity meter may be used with the thermometer 40 to measure the concentration of the chemical solution.

10 The present examples and embodiments are to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive, and the invention is not to be limited to the details given herein, but may be modified within the scope and equivalence of the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for preparing a chemical solution,
comprising the steps of:

dissolving a chemical gas in a liquid to prepare the
chemical solution, wherein the liquid is pure water or a
mixture having a predetermined composition; and

discharging at least either one of an adjusted amount
of the chemical gas that was not dissolved in the liquid and
a predetermined amount of the chemical solution, wherein the
dissolving step and the discharging step are performed at
substantially the same time.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the
dissolving step includes forming a swirl of fine bubbles of
the chemical gas in the liquid.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the
dissolving step includes ejecting the bubbles in a direction
inclined relative to a vertical direction.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the
dissolving step includes cooling the liquid.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the
discharging step includes forming bubbles of the chemical
gas that was not dissolved by the dissolving step to return
the undissolved chemical gas to the liquid.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the
discharging step includes reintroducing the chemical gas
that was not dissolved by the dissolving step to the liquid
when the concentration of the undissolved chemical gas is
equal to or greater than a predetermined value.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein used chemical gas disposed of by a facility for fabricating electronic devices is dissolved in the liquid in the dissolving step.

8. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

collecting chemical gas from used chemical solution disposed of by a facility for fabricating electronic devices; and

supplying the collected chemical gas to the liquid.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein the collecting step includes at least one of heating the chemical solution and forming inert gas bubbles in the chemical solution.

10. The method according to claim 1, wherein the chemical gas includes at least one of a group consisting of ammonia gas, hydrogen fluoride gas, hydrogen sulfide gas, and hydrogen chloride gas.

11. The method according to claim 1, wherein the chemical gas is ammonia gas, and the chemical solution includes at least one of a group consisting of ammonia water, a mixture of ammonia water and hydrogen peroxide, and a mixture of ammonium fluoride and hydrofluoric acid.

12. The method according to claim 1, further comprising supplying a raw material that differs from the chemical gas to the prepared chemical solution.

13. A chemical solution preparation apparatus comprising:

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a preparation tank for storing a liquid, which is one of pure water or a mixture having a predetermined composition;

5 a dissolution unit for dissolving a chemical gas in the liquid; and

at least either one of a gas discharge control unit for discharging an adjusted amount of the chemical gas that was not dissolved in the liquid by the dissolution unit and a liquid discharge control unit for discharging a predetermined amount of the chemical solution from the preparation tank, wherein one of the gas discharge control unit and the liquid discharge control unit is operated at substantially the same time as the dissolution unit.

14. The preparation apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the dissolution unit includes a gas supply unit for forming bubbles of the chemical gas in the preparation tank to dissolve the chemical gas in the liquid.

15. The preparation apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the gas supply unit includes a first pipe for supplying the chemical gas to the preparation tank and a flow controller arranged in the first pipe.

16. The preparation apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising a cooling unit for cooling the liquid in the preparation tank.

17. The preparation apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the cooling unit includes a pump for circulating the chemical solution between the preparation tank and a second pipe and a cooling element connected to the second pipe.

18. The preparation apparatus according to claim 16,

wherein the cooling unit includes a cooling element connected to the preparation tank and a pump for circulating the chemical solution between the preparation tank and the cooling element.

19. The preparation apparatus according to claim 16, further comprising a gas cylinder containing liquefied chemical gas, wherein the cooling unit includes a heat exchanger for exchanging heat between the gas cylinder and the preparation tank.

20. The preparation apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the dissolution unit includes a bubbler element for supplying the chemical gas into the liquid, and wherein the bubbler element has a nozzle for forming fine bubbles of the chemical gas.

21. The preparation apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the nozzle is inclined by a predetermined angle relative to a vertical direction.

22. The preparation apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the nozzle extends vertically, and the bubbler element further includes a deflection plate for guiding the bubbles in a predetermined direction.

23. The preparation apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising:

a concentration measuring device for measuring the concentration of the chemical solution; and

a concentration adjusting device for adjusting the concentration of the chemical solution in accordance with the measured result of the concentration measuring device.

24. The preparation apparatus according to claim 23,
wherein the concentration measuring device includes at least
one of a viscosity meter, a specific gravity meter, an
ultrasonic wave velocity meter, and a specific conductance
meter, and wherein the concentration adjusting device
includes a controller for calculating the concentration of
the chemical solution from the measured result of the
concentration measuring device and controlling the amount of
the chemical gas supplied to the preparation tank from the
dissolution unit in accordance with the calculated
concentration.

25. The preparation apparatus according to claim 24,
wherein the concentration measuring device measures the heat
of reaction during dissolution of the chemical gas with a
thermometer and calculates the amount of dissolved chemical
gas from the measured result to obtain the concentration of
the chemical solution.

26. The preparation apparatus according to claim 24,
wherein the chemical gas is contained in a container, and
wherein the concentration measuring device calculates the
amount of the used chemical gas by measuring the change in
the weight of the container and calculates the concentration
of the chemical solution from the amount of the used
chemical gas.

27. The preparation apparatus according to claim 13,
further comprising an ice particle generator for generating
ice particles, and wherein the dissolution unit causes
contact between the ice particles and the chemical gas to
dissolve the chemical gas in the liquid.

28. The preparation apparatus according to claim 13,

further comprising a gas purification unit for purifying the chemical gas with pure water.

29. A chemical solution preparation apparatus comprising:

a dissolution unit for dissolving a chemical gas in a liquid to prepare a chemical solution and cooling the chemical solution during the preparation; and

a gas discharge control unit for discharging an adjusted amount of the chemical gas that was not dissolved in the liquid by the dissolution unit.

30. The preparation apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the dissolution unit is connected to a facility for fabricating electronic devices to dissolve used chemical gas disposed of by the fabrication facility in the liquid.

31. The preparation apparatus according to claim 30, further comprising a gas purification unit for purifying the chemical gas with pure water and providing the purified chemical gas to the fabrication facility.

32. The preparation apparatus according to claim 29, further comprising a gas collection unit connected to the dissolution unit and a facility for fabricating electronic devices, wherein the gas collection unit collects chemical gas from used chemical solution disposed of by the fabrication facility, and supplies the collected chemical gas to the dissolution unit.

33. The preparation apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the gas collection unit collects the chemical gas by performing at least one of heating the chemical solution and forming inert gas bubbles in the chemical solution.

34. The preparation apparatus according to claim 29,
further comprising a pipe for supplying the chemical gas to
the dissolution unit and a flow controller arranged in the
pipe.

35. The preparation apparatus according to claim 29,
wherein the chemical gas is contained in a predetermined
container, and wherein the preparation apparatus measures
the weight of the chemical gas in the container to calculate
the amount of the chemical gas supplied to the preparation
tank.

36. The preparation apparatus according to claim 29,
further comprising a hydrophobic filter for separating
undissolved chemical gas from the chemical solution
discharged by the dissolution unit, the separated chemical
gas being supplied to the gas discharge control unit.

37. The preparation apparatus according to claim 29,
further comprising a concentration measuring device for
extracting some of the chemical solution during the
preparation and measuring the concentration of the chemical
solution, the concentration of the chemical solution being
adjusted to a predetermined concentration by supplying the
chemical gas to the chemical solution during preparation.

38. The preparation apparatus according to claim 29,
further comprising a raw material supplying device for
supplying a raw material that differs from the chemical gas
to the prepared chemical solution.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A chemical solution preparation apparatus for preparing
a chemical solution from chemical gas of an industrial
chemical grade. A dissolution unit dissolves the chemical
gas in pure water, which is contained in a tank. A gas
discharge control unit controls the amount of chemical gas
discharged from the dissolution unit. A liquid discharge
discharges a predetermined amount of the chemical solution
10 from the tank. At least one of the gas discharge control
unit and the liquid discharge control unit are operated at
substantially the same time as the dissolution unit.

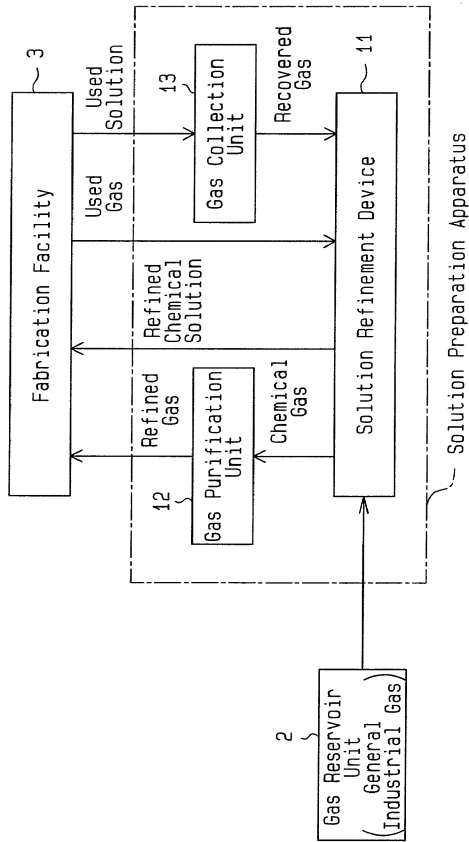
Fig.1

Fig.2

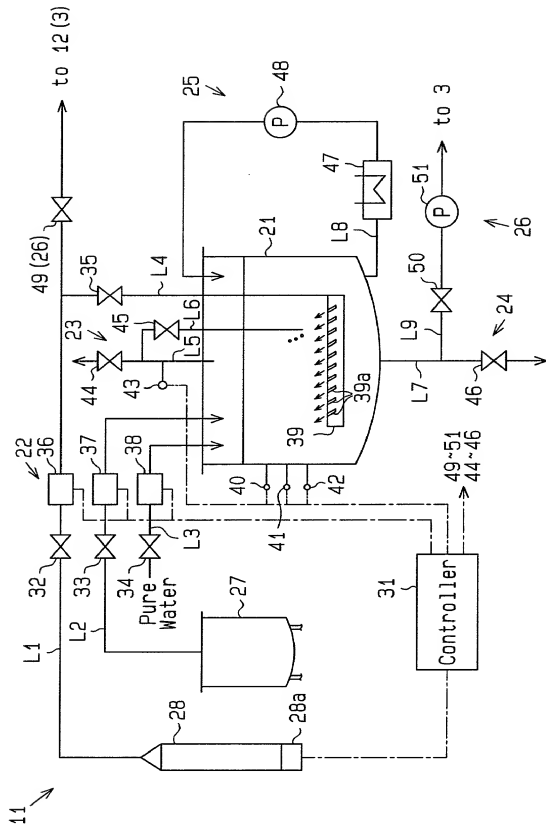


Fig.3A

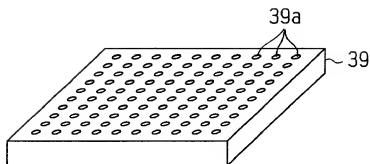


Fig.3B

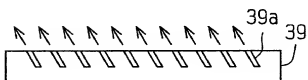


Fig.3C

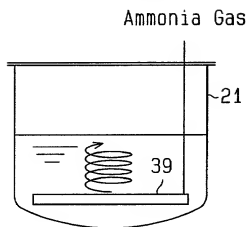


Fig.4

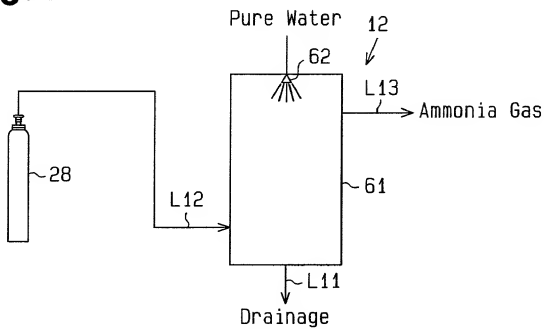


Fig.5

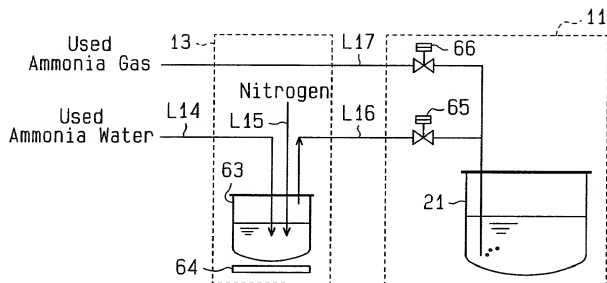


Fig.6A

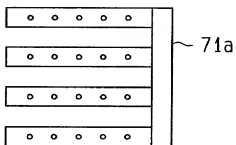


Fig.6B

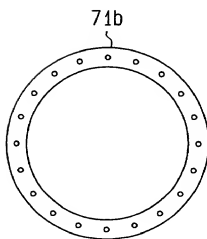


Fig.6C

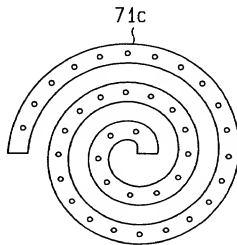


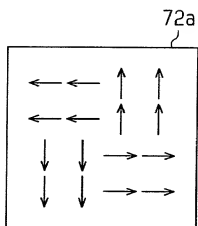
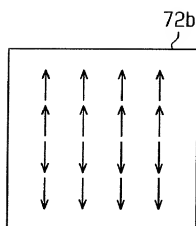
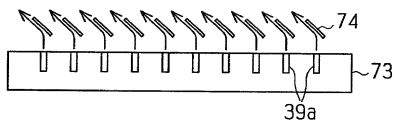
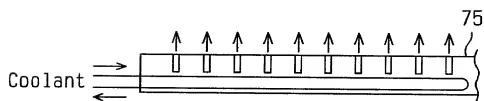
Fig.7A**Fig.7B****Fig.8****Fig.9**

Fig.10

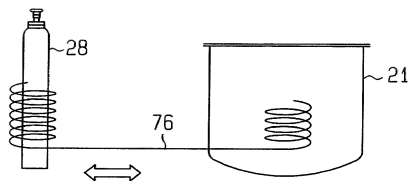


Fig.11

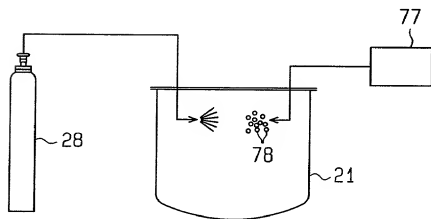
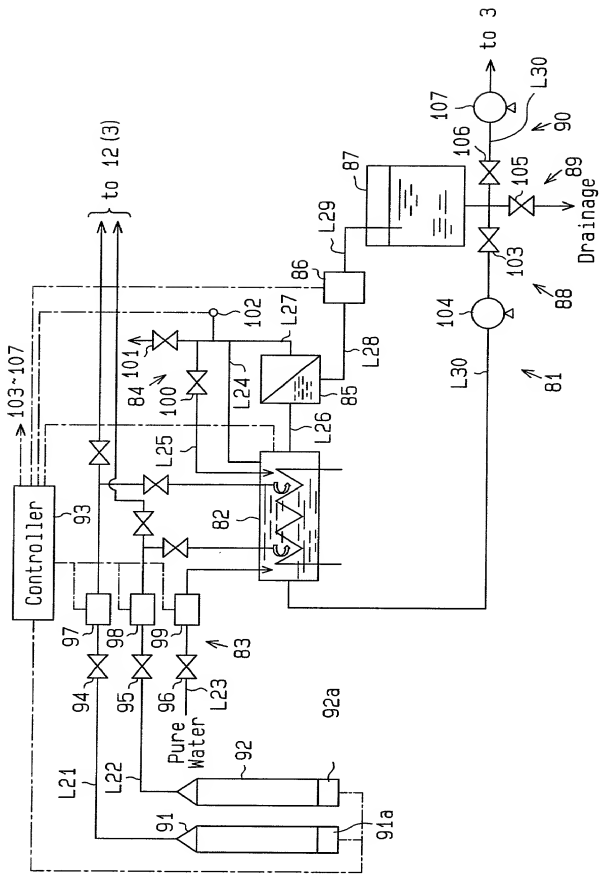


Fig.12



Declaration and Power of Attorney for U.S. Patent Application

特許出願宣言書及び委任状

Japanese Language Declaration

日本語宣言書

下の氏名の発明者として、私は以下の通り宣言します。

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

私の住所、私書箱、国籍は下記の私の氏名の後に記載された通りです。

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated next to my name.

下記の名称の発明に関して請求範囲に記載され、特許出願している発明内容について、私が最初かつ唯一の発明者（下記の氏名が一つの場合）もしくは最初かつ共同発明者であると（下記の名称が複数の場合）信じています。

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PREPARING

CHEMICAL SOLUTIONS

上記発明の明細書（下記の欄でx印がついていない場合は、本書に添付）は、

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☐ 月 日 に提出され、米国出願番号または特許協定条約
国際出願番号を _____ とし、
（該当する場合） _____ に訂正されました。

☐ was filed on _____
as United States Application Number or
PCT International Application Number
_____ and was amended on
_____ (if applicable).

私は、特許請求範囲を含む上記訂正後の明細書を検討し、内容を理解していることをここに表明します。

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

私は、連邦規則法典第37編第1条56項に定義されるとおり、特許資格の有無について重要な情報を開示する義務があることを認めます。

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

Japanese Language Declaration (日本語宣言書)

私は、米国法典第35編119条(a)-(d)項又は365条(b)項に基づき下記の、米国外の国の少なくとも一カ国を指定している特許協力条約365(a)項に基づく国際出願、又は外国での特許出願もしくは発明者証の出願についての外国優先権をここに主張するとともに、優先権を主張している、本出願の前に出願された特許または発明者証の外国出願を以下に、枠内をマークすることで、示しています。

Prior Foreign Application(s)

外国での先行出願
Pat. Appln. No. 11-366734

Japan

(Number)

(Country)

(番号)

(国名)

(Number)

(Country)

(番号)

(国名)

私、第35編米国法典119条(e)項に基づいて下記の米国外特許出願規定に記載された権利をここに主張いたします。

(Application No.)

(Filing Date)

(出願番号)

(出願日)

私は、下記の米国法典第35編120条に基づいて下記の米国外特許出願に記載された権利、又は米国を指定している特許協力条約365条(c)項に基づく権利をここに主張します。また、本出願の各請求範囲の内容が米国法典第35編112条第1項又は特許協力条約で規定された方法で先行する米国外特許出願に開示されていない限り、その先行米国外出願書提出日以降で本出願書の日本国内または特許協力条約国際提出日までの期間中に入手された、連邦規則法典第37編1条56項で定義された特許資格の有無に関する重要な情報について開示義務があることを認識しています。

(Application No.)

(Filing Date)

(出願番号)

(出願日)

(Application No.)

(Filing Date)

(出願番号)

(出願日)

私は、私自身の知識に基づいて本宣言書で私が行なう表明が真実であり、かつ私の入手した情報と私の信じることに基づく表明が全て真実であると信じていること、さらに故意になされた虚偽の表明及びそれと同等の行為は米国法典第18編第1001条に基づき、罰金または拘禁、もしくはその両方により処罰されること、そしてそのような故意による虚偽の声明を行えば、出願した、又は既に許可された特許の有効性が失われることを認識し、よってここに上記のごとく宣言を致します。

I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119 (a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Priority Not Claimed

優先権主張なし

24 / 12 / 1999

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

(出願年月日)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

(出願年月日)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

(Application No.)

(Filing Date)

(出願番号)

(出願日)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s), or 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of application.

(Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned)

(現況: 特許許可済、係属中、放棄済)

(Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned)

(現況: 特許許可済、係属中、放棄済)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Japanese Language Declaration

(日本語宣言書)

委任状： 私は下記の発明者として、本出願に関する一切の手続きを米特許商標局に対して遂行する弁理士または代理人として、下記の者を指名いたします。(弁理士、または代理人の氏名及び登録番号を明記のこと)

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith (*list name and registration number*)
See list of attorneys and/or agents on page 5.

書類送付先

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Washington, D.C. 20006

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唯一または第一発明者名	Full name of sole or first inventor
	Masataka FUKUIZUMI
発明者の署名	Inventor's signature
日付	Date
	<i>Masataka Fukuiizumi</i> June 19, 2000
住所	Residence
	Kasugai-shi, Japan
国籍	Citizenship
	Japan
私書箱	Post Office Address
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第二共同発明者	Full name of second joint inventor, if any
	Toru MATOBA
第二共同発明者	Second inventor's signature
日付	Date
	<i>Toru Matoba</i> June 19, 2000
住所	Residence
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(第三以降の共同発明者についても同様に記載し、署名をすること)

(Supply similar information and signature for third and subsequent joint inventors.)

第三共同発明者		Full name of third joint inventor, if any	
		Hiroshi OSUDA	
第三発明者の署名	日付	Third inventor's signature	Date
		Hiroshi Osuda	June 19, 2000
住所		Residence	
		Kasugai-shi, Japan	
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第四共同発明者		Full name of fourth joint inventor, if any	
第四発明者の署名	日付	Fourth inventor's signature	Date
住所		Residence	
国籍		Citizenship	
私書箱		Post Office Address	
第五共同発明者		Full name of fifth joint inventor, if any	
第五発明者の署名	日付	Fifth inventor's signature	Date
住所		Residence	
国籍		Citizenship	
私書箱		Post Office Address	
第六共同発明者		Full name of sixth joint inventor, if any	
第六発明者の署名	日付	Sixth inventor's signature	Date
住所		Residence	
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